



IFES Quarterly Report: April 1, 2005 – June 30, 2005

Guinea: Strengthening Civic Dialogue

**USAID Associate Cooperative Award No. 675-A-00-04-00026-00 under
USAID Cooperative Agreement No. DGC A-00-04-00026-00
Project Period: November 15, 2003 – March 1, 2006**

Total Budget: \$1,440,000* Expenses Recorded to Date: \$981,258

* On June 6, 2005 IFES submitted a re-programming request which reflected an anticipated reduction in estimated award value of \$500,000

Results Summary

- Conducted a National Civic Education Campaign throughout the administrative regions of Guinea
- Organized a campaign debriefing to share results of National Civic Education Campaign
- Conducted a series of conference-debates in various regions
- Provided financial support to trainings and regional social fora through IFES subgrants

Background

Three major opposition parties (UFR, RPG, and UPG) continue to boycott the political dialogue process on the grounds that existing laws are not applied, the administration is not neutral, the airwaves have not been liberalized, there is no equal access to state media, and opposition members have difficulty organizing meetings. However, one of the “radical” opposition parties and member of the FRAD (Front pour l’Alternance Démocratique), UFDG, led by Ba Mamadou, has decided to join the dialogue on the basis that the government has shown some progress toward liberalization. Parties began negotiating certain themes relating to the electoral process, such as: the establishment of an independent electoral management body, transparent ballot boxes, single ballot, and electoral observation. There is controversy surrounding these upcoming elections vis-à-vis articles 88, 89, and 90 of the Constitution which were revised by referendum in 2001, stating that the district mayors and *Chefs de quartier* are nominated by the government and no longer elected by the people (jeopardizing the decentralization process at its core). The Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MATD), Kiridi Bangoura, however, assures that laws are currently being drafted that will clarify this issue in favor of the decentralization process.

There is much progress to be made in the discussions before parties can agree first amongst themselves and then reconcile with the government. In the meantime, the MATD decreed that an exceptional revision of the electoral list would take place from April 29-May 30. Dissident opposition parties considered the discussion and decision concerning the revision of the electoral list as premature, since the process had not been negotiated. They refused to have representatives on the commissions set up for the revision, as stipulated in the electoral code, yet they encouraged their members to register.

On April 29, the MATD officially announced that the election scheduled for June would not take place until the end of the year. The Prime Minister also stated in an interview that elections will take place only if all political parties participate, putting the pressure on those opposition parties that are still absent from the dialogue process. The EU plans to finance the election up to 1.9 million Euros, but this aid is conditional to the establishment of an independent/autonomous electoral commission and the liberalization of the airwaves. Although a draft decree for the liberalization of the airwaves was signed by the members of government in the presence of President Lansana Conté, it has to be signed by the President himself before it is effective.

Two new opposition political forces appeared in the last month. The AFIA party created by Dr. Sadiou Bella Diallo, a former leader of the UPR (Union pour le Progrès et le Renouveau) which is currently the only major opposition party represented at the National Assembly. In addition, Louceiny Fall, the former prime minister, announced the venue for his new party. These developments altered the political scene considerably, weakening the UPR and announcing the emergence of new forces in the race for Conté's succession.

Political parties, civil society organizations and members of the administration met on Gorée Island in June to discuss the electoral process in light of the upcoming election. The meeting was another attempt to establish consensual views on the electoral system, similar to the efforts at the Kassa roundtable in April 2004, which was facilitated by IFES. The Gorée workshop was also a way to get all the major stakeholders together around a table in a dialogue process, which has not been possible in Conakry.

Overall, the past couple of months in Guinea have shown timid progress in the political dialogue process and the push for reform.

Program Activities

CSO Subgrant Program

IFES provided subawards to the following organizations and CSO networks to conduct a national civic education campaign and a national electoral education campaign: the Free Union of Guinea Teachers and Researchers (SLECG); the Association for the Development of Community Initiatives (ADIC); the Guinean Volunteers for Development (UGVD); the African Training Center for Development (CENAFOD); the Guinean Volunteers for Economic and Cultural Development (OVODEC); the Association for the Defense of Women's Rights (ADDEF); and the Regional CSO Councils of N'Zérékoré and Kindia. The Regional CSO Council of Boké was also responsible for implementing the civic education campaign through a direct contract for services. IFES selected these organizations because of their previous experience in managing similar projects, their credibility, and the quality of their work and professionalism during previous IFES civic education campaigns in 2002-2003. In May, USAID's Cooperative agreement with IFES de-obligated \$500,000 which will alter the subgrants substantially, as IFES is forced to remove the electoral education campaign from its implementation plan.

Civic Education Campaign

The above-listed CSO partners deployed 176 previously trained animators in April, May and June to conduct a nationwide civic education campaign in all 38 prefectures and communes of Guinea. In all, 1420 training sessions on rights, responsibilities and citizenship were conducted in the 9 main languages of Guinea, using pedagogical tools developed by IFES. Animator kits included picture boxes illustrating themes such as the Guinean constitution, citizens' rights and responsibilities, national unity, the separation of powers, the importance of identity cards and other legal documents. The nationwide campaign reached over 175,000 citizens of which 75,000 were women. The pedagogy used provided both illiterate and literate populations, and in some cases entire villages, an opportunity for dialogue on important issues in a highly interactive environment.

Training sessions were also organized in 113 high schools throughout the country. In Conakry, 15 of the 36 animators were teachers; they were deployed in 66 high schools targeting over 18,000 students. Student unrest at the University of Conakry kept the campaign out of university walls. Also in Conakry, a special program initiative implemented by the IFES-Guinea Administrative Director, Cheick Diakite, targeted the physically handicapped community, the deaf/mute population, and groups of citizens with HIV-AIDS. Six animators were trained for this purpose: two infected with AIDS, two physically handicapped and two from the deaf community. Over 500 people were touched by these trainings which took place in the Conakry School for the Deaf and Mute, outside Mosques and other areas where these target populations gather. The civic education campaign was highly covered by the national radio and television, as well as rural and community radios. Over 190 programs were aired throughout the country ranging from special magazines, documentaries, roundtables to simple announcements.

Questionnaires to evaluate the level of understanding of participants before and after training sessions were distributed and are currently being compiled in conjunction with IFES-Guinea's monitoring and evaluation plan which will quantify and qualify the impact of the campaign.

Conference-Debates

A series of conference-debates were held in the seven administrative regions of Guinea to provide a cross section of Guinean leaders in their field an opportunity to come together and discuss different aspects of citizenship and the rule of law. Notable speakers were engaged to facilitate the discussions and provide feedback to participants' questions and comments. Over 1500 representatives of civil society, political parties and the state actively participated in these conferences. As a follow-on to previous conferences organized by IFES in 2002-2003 on the same theme in 16 prefectures, IFES selected 20 new prefectures to host these conferences.

The conferences-debates provided an ideal venue for citizens to exercise their knowledge of the new concepts they learned through the civic education campaign sessions. It allowed them to pose questions and debate opinions over citizen rights and responsibilities in an open environment, to increase their understanding and acceptance of the themes presented.

Civic Education Campaign Debriefing

On May 20 and 21, campaign regional coordinators and supervisors met in Conakry to share the results, lessons-learned, and anecdotes from the trainings conducted in each of their regions. Representatives from the government, political parties, the international community and the donor community were also invited to participate in the debriefing session. The top leaders of the main political parties (both the opposition and the party in power) attended. This was the first time in 2 years that the leaders were together around a table. It provided an opportunity for each organization to share their region's report on what the grassroots population thinks of and expects from their political leaders. It was a highly critical but frank debate, each participant expressing his or her point of view with openness. There was a lot of "tongue in cheek" interrelation between party leaders which filled the room with warmth and rekindled the hope amongst participants that a political dialogue is still possible in Guinea. The event was largely covered by the national media and the written press. An important element that came out of the debate was a request on the part of the party leaders for IFES' assistance in addressing the Guinean population on political issues. This is being discussed currently with USAID.

Civil Society/Political Party Dialogues

Additional funds became available to our subgrantees due to currency gains with the Guinean franc. IFES' CSO partners together decided to use the funds towards the training of political party representatives in the prefectures on the electoral process in Guinea. Thirty representatives of the six major parties (UFR, UPR, RPG, PUP, UPG, and UFDG) were invited to attend these trainings for which IFES provided four trainers: Bakary Kaba, former Director of Decentralization, Daouda Condé, Civic Education Advisor at the Ministry of Education, Makanéra Kaké and Malick Diakité, both law professors and previous IFES judicial experts. Trainings began on June 25-26 in N'Zérékoré and Labé, June 28-29 in Faranah and Mamou, July 1-2 in Kankan and Kindia, and July 4-5 in Conakry and Boké. Trainings showed a marked interest on the part of the participants while highlighting the huge gaps in their knowledge of the electoral code and other issues related to the Guinean constitution. The political class expressed the need to extend these trainings to local state representatives to ensure fair and transparent elections.

Regional Social Fora

During the Guinean Social Forum in March 2004 and the first West African Social Forum held in Conakry in November 2004, Guinean CSOs expressed the need for similar events to be organized outside Conakry to educate citizens and local CSOs on a variety of issues which directly affect their lives and well being. In this spirit, two regional fora were organized by the Regional CSO Councils as part of the subgrant funds IFES issued to the CNOSCG to promote social dialogue. The first forum was held in Kindia, May 24-27, and brought together over 100 representatives of CSOs from the regions of Labé, Boké, Kindia and Conakry. A second forum was held in Kankan, regrouping the regions of N'zérékoré, Mamou, Faranah and Kankan in which approximately 180 CSO representatives participated. These fora were the local expression of other social movements organized at the national, regional and global level. Panels and presentations addressed issues such as debt reduction, international trade agreements, the environment, agriculture, health, education, democracy, political dialogue and local governance. There were also art exhibits and cultural events. These encounters were

intended to be a form of continuing education for the participants as well as an attempt to mix regions (and ethnic groups) together.

Professional CSO Advocacy Actions

IFES has continued its relationship with the ten targeted professional organizations that were part of the capacity-building segment of IFES' programming. These include the Bar Association, notaries, chartered accountants, medical doctors, pharmacists, architects, veterinarians, engineers, bankers, and the Arbitration Board. The recently established *Union Nationale des Ordres et Organisations Socio Professionnelles de Guinée* (UNOOPS), comprised of members of these professional organizations, has been meeting with various ministers, diplomats, the President of the National Assembly, etc., to introduce itself and present their plan of action. Their tour has received national media coverage. It should be noted that they are doing this on their own, without direct IFES support. Their determination is encouraging. IFES Country Director, Elizabeth Côté, met with them on April 8 to discuss IFES' assistance towards their advocacy actions. In light of this meeting, these organizations began preparing a proposal and budget for potential future subgrant assistance from IFES to support advocacy initiatives toward democratic reform. This segment of IFES' programming is now on hold due to the financial constraints the program now faces due to the de-obligation of \$500,000 from the project budget.

IFES-Guinea Web Resource

IFES-Guinea has begun work on a website resource center that will provide valuable information and materials to local partners. The site will provide useful links to IFES reports, monitoring & evaluation results, as well as upcoming IFES activities.

IFES-Guinea Financial Situation

In May, IFES-Guinea was informed by the USAID Mission that due to a pipeline problem, the Mission did not receive funding for FY'05. As a result, an IFES request for incremental funding was reduced from \$700,000 to \$200,000. The program for \$1,940,000 was brought down to \$1,440,000, indicating a de-obligation of \$500,000 in project funding.

IFES-Guinea submitted a reprogramming request to the USAID Mission on June 7 with an accompanying revised implementation plan to demonstrate which activities are feasible under the revised budget. Most programming scheduled from June forward has been put on hold until the reprogramming is approved and new program activities are established. The new reprogramming budget allows for IFES-Guinea to operate through November 30, 2005. In the meantime, IFES-Guinea is also pursuing alternate forms of funding to be able to maintain a presence in Guinea.

Future Activities

- Finalize revised implementation plan and related timeline
- Finalize the construction of the website
- Work on the preparation of activities included in the approved implementation plan
- Provide technical support for the organization of the upcoming Africa Social Forum
- Pursue complementary forms of funding